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# **NEO-NAZI STRENGTH AND STRATEGY IN WEST GERMANY**

**A Follow-up Survey to the  
AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE's Reports:**

**"The Recent Growth of Neo-Nazism  
in Europe," September, 1951**

**"Neo-Nazi and Nationalist Movements  
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# **NEO-NAZI STRENGTH AND STRATEGY IN WEST GERMANY**



**FORCES ATTACKING DEMOCRACY**  
in West Germany: an Up-to-Date Account



**THE COMING NATIONAL ELECTIONS**  
in West Germany and Their Significance  
for the Democratic Future of the Country



**THE DEMOCRATIC ELEMENTS and**  
Their Fight Against Nazi Attempts at a  
Comeback

**THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE**  
**386 Fourth Avenue**  
**New York 16, N. Y.**

***July, 1953***

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## Introduction

It is only eight years since the Nazis were defeated. But the headway now being made by ultra-nationalist and neo-Nazi elements striving for a comeback must be regarded as a serious threat to the democratic future of West Germany. Developments of recent months have put this threat in a new light.

First, the strategy of the ultra-nationalists has changed significantly. Thanks to the vigilance of democratic forces and action by the West German Government, the organized and open neo-Nazi movement, represented by the Socialist Reich party under General Otto Ernst Remer, has been dispersed. At the same time, however, neo-nazism has been making rapid progress in respectable circles. Instead of working through a political party of their own—which could be recognized, isolated and fought as such—the more intelligent and sophisticated of the former Nazis have set out to infiltrate and ultimately dominate other parties.

Thus, the ultra-nationalists have scored impressive gains in the Free Democratic party, third largest group in the coalition currently controlling the West German parliament. They have increased their strength substantially in the Deutsche party, also a coalition member. They predominate in the Gesamt-deutscher Bloc, better known as the BHE, which is a rising force on the political scene. They also have gained influence in important veterans' organizations.

Often promoted by figureheads of standing or means, this form of neo-nazism is more subtle than the Socialist Reich variety—and more dangerous because, moving gradually and behind the scenes, without attracting attention or provoking opposition, it is difficult to combat.

Another factor favoring the neo-Nazi drive is the "Restoration" temper prevalent in Germany today. This frame of mind looks to a revival of what the Germans consider their old-fashioned virtues and a re-acceptance of authoritarian ways which, in the German view, brought prestige and power in the past. While "Restoration" attitudes need not necessarily prove disastrous, it must be remembered that such attitudes helped precipitate World War I, sanctioned the rise of Hitler and ignited World War II.

Today, German public opinion seems to be veering toward more noxious nationalist themes. There is a growing sentiment that Hitlerism held much that was good, that its faults have been exaggerated. The need to build Western

defenses against communism has been seized by the neo-Nazis as a confirmation of Hitler's foreign policies; the impression constantly spreads that Hitler was right and the democracies wrong in their approach to world politics. Thus, with regard to foreign as well as internal affairs, the tendency to discredit democracy gains strength.

In this climate of opinion, the worst elements in Germany have achieved virtually complete success in their campaign to recapture public approval. War criminals, SS troopers and former Nazis of similar stripe are again regarded as good Germans who merely were doing their duty. There is much talk of the "injustices" done to the war criminals, and the "war crimes" supposedly wreaked by the Allies on the German people.

In this atmosphere the authors and publicists who helped lay the groundwork for acceptance of Hitlerian ideas, such as Lebensraum, are back in business. Anti-Semitic pamphlets and publications are reappearing—not yet in any great numbers, it is true; but only two years ago, the anti-Semites felt constrained to make their points covertly.

Because of the perceptible shift in public opinion, neo-Nazis have been able to infiltrate political parties and influence party programs without drawing particular attention to themselves. Ideas similar to theirs are becoming common currency.

It is against this changing background that the progress of neo-nazism in West Germany must be measured and its potential evaluated.

When, some years ago, men who had served the Nazi cause first re-entered the civil service, education and other crucial fields, criticism was countered on the grounds that the returnees were in subordinate positions and had no voice in policy. Lately, however, neo-Nazi infiltrations have been aimed at policy-making posts. The so-called "Naumann Plot" to take over the West German government took place simultaneously with, and gained protective coloration from, the more general return of former Nazis to places of influence.

Uncovered by the British, the Naumann plot resulted in a temporary setback for the neo-Nazis. The prestige of the Free Democratic party suffered especially. The West German Government deserves credit for reversing its initially hostile attitude toward the British disclosures, and for realizing the seriousness of the situation. Similarly, men like Vice-Premier Bluecher of the Free Democratic party, who have vigorously attacked the nationalist wing, also merit credit and support.

Much publicity has been given to the "purges" undertaken in the Free Democratic and Deutsche parties following the Naumann exposure. But little attention has been paid to the fact that many of the ousted ultra-nationalists have been replaced by men whose records are virtually as unsavory. Further-

more, the ultra-nationalists have continued to make progress in state conventions of the Free Democrats and of the Deutsche party, particularly in Bavaria. A politician like Middelhaue, who served as one of the main transmitters of neo-Nazi influence, has been retained as FDP vice-chairman and was re-elected head of the party in his state. Middelhaue's most recent speeches give little evidence that he has changed his ideas. As recently as May 14, he urged that the Bundesrat, the German parliament's upper house, be abolished and replaced by some vague group of national "sages." He advertised the FDP as "the party of the union of nationalist forces . . . of faith in Germany."

The democratic forces, it must be stressed, are still in control of the situation. They command the key political positions, enjoy mass support, and have allies of considerable strength in an independent press, in the trade unions, and among groups which are sincerely seeking to build a Germany which recognizes its past errors and wishes to avoid them. In the past year, the Government has shown that, given the will to do so, it can move effectively against totalitarian-minded groups, without violating democratic principles. Institutionally, democracy has been strengthened by the creation of a Constitutional Court.

But, on the whole, it would seem that the more nationalist and less desirable elements are making the greater progress.

The coming West German elections are critically important. They can be expected to reveal a truer picture of what Germans are thinking—as reflected in their political preferences—than the vote of four years ago. At that time the Western occupation powers were running the country; today West Germany is virtually a sovereign state, almost complete master of its foreign and domestic policies.

Four years ago the country depended on huge outside aid to keep its economy going; today that economy is practically the strongest in Europe.

Four years ago, with defeat still fresh in the people's minds, Germany was seeking rehabilitation as a member of the family of nations. Today the people know that their nation is being wooed by East and West. Many Germans object to such international commitments as the Schuman Plan or the European Defense Community, regarding them as curbs on German sovereignty and freedom of action.

Four years ago the right-radicals and neo-Nazis still did not dare show their colors. Today the radical right, publicly unorganized though it may be, will exert a telling impact on the coming elections.

West Germany represents one of the greatest political gambles ever taken by the United States. We are betting that the nation can be rebuilt as a powerful military and economic force, a check to Soviet aggression, and yet become truly democratic. This gamble is viewed with apprehension by most Europeans

who, having felt the lash of German domination, are as fearful of Germany's growing might as they are skeptical of German capacities for democracy.

The establishment of a German army integrated into a European Defense Community, impressive and important as this achievement would be, should not be hailed as signalizing the success of United States foreign policy. For, a German people motivated by the concepts and aims that have marked their nation ever since it became a modern state, would eventually foil the purposes of the European Defense Community and, rearmed, would go on the rampage once more. That is why American policy in Germany must stand or fall with the internal direction chosen by the people.

This report seeks to trace the latest developments in West Germany as they affect the fight for democracy in that country; to portray the climate of German opinion; to give an up-to-date picture of the neo-Nazi and right-radical forces; and to indicate some guideposts to the turn of future events, with particular reference to the coming national elections.



## **The Coming Elections in West Germany—Test for Democracy**

The two major political parties in West Germany are the Christian Democratic Union—or Christian Social Union—and the Social Democratic party. They are democratic groups; that is to say, they have a stake in, feel a responsibility for, and can be credited with certain positive steps in behalf of, the present democratic structure of the Government. Both parties, however, have at times made concessions to chauvinistic and ultra-nationalist opinion, when seeking votes.

In the 1949 elections to the German parliament, the two parties jointly polled more than 14¼ million votes, or over 60 per cent of the total cast. Adding almost three quarters of a million votes gained by the small Zentrum party, and those polled by the liberal wing of the Free Democratic party, American officials calculated that 70 per cent of the German electorate voted for democratic candidates.

On the basis of state elections since 1949, competent observers of the German scene estimate that the two major parties will again collect some 14 million votes or more—an encouraging prediction at first glance. Unfortunately, however, the prospect is by no means so reassuring when one considers other key factors that must be taken into account, such as the relationship between the leading parties; changes within them since 1949; and the possible emergence of a balance-of-power party whose aims and activities are open to considerable suspicion—the Gesamtdeutscher Bloc, formerly known as the BHE, or League of Expellees and Victims of Injustice.

### ***Relationships between the Parties***

No single party commands enough seats in the Bundestag—the lower and more important house of the German parliament—to maintain a Government majority by itself. Of 401 Bundestag seats, 146 are held by the Christian Democratic Union of Chancellor Adenauer; 130 by the Social Democratic party; and only 49 by the Free Democratic party, the third largest group. Thus, only a coalition can command enough votes to exercise control.

If, in the future, Germany should again become an ultra-nationalist state, history may well lay the blame for this tragedy on the inability of the Christian Democrats and the Socialists, the leading democratic parties, to form the ruling coalition. To a great extent this failure has been due to a clash of personalities between two rather autocratic and stubborn men: Chancellor Adenauer and Socialist leader Kurt Schumacher who died in 1952. Moreover, the bourgeois conservatism of the CDU naturally differs from the Socialist outlook on matters of economic policy, while in the management of West Germany's foreign

affairs there has been even sharper disagreement. Chancellor Adenauer's policy is devoted to making Germany a member of the European Defense Community. The Socialists argue that this means giving up all hope of a re-united Germany embracing both the Western part of the country and the East Zone now under Communist domination. Since Schumacher's death, there have been some attempts to bring about a rapprochement between the two parties, but thus far without success.

The coalition that came into being in 1949 veered definitely to the right. It was formed by the CDU, the Free Democrats and the Deutsche party. Holding 215 votes among them in the Bundestag, they have proved a workable majority coalition. Opponents of the alignment argue that in order to keep the FDP and the DP from bolting, the Federal Government has on occasion pursued nationalist or undesirable lines of action. Illustrations are the failure to screen the Government bureaucracy more carefully; the permeation of the West German Foreign Office by officials who held posts under the Nazi regime; and the Government's attitude toward war criminals.

Chancellor Adenauer is determined to continue the present coalition. To that end, a rather complicated bill has been introduced in the Bundestag. This measure would favor parties making election coalitions and would, in effect, preserve the tenure of the three dominant partners. While not greeted with enthusiasm by the more ambitious Free Democratic party, the bill is supported by the Deutsche party which sees an opportune means of guaranteeing its present score of seats in the legislature. Since the majority of the Bundestag is cool to the proposed law, it is not likely to pass.

In any event, there is no doubt that the Free Democratic party, and possibly the Deutsche party, will still have enough votes in the next legislature to determine the eventual coalition.

### ***Internal Changes in the Free Democratic Party***

The FDP is today the most ambitious of the so-called "respectable" political parties. In the post-war elections of 1946 it attracted less than 7 per cent of the vote; in the August 1949, elections to the Bundestag, it won 11.9 per cent. Since then, the party has polled, on the average, 13 per cent of the vote at legislative elections. Its mounting strength, generally attributed to the consistency with which it has blown the nationalist horn, has improved its bargaining power in the Government coalition.

United States Government reports have described the Free Democratic party as follows: "With regard to nationalism the FDP is geographically not uniform. In the southern parts of Germany, Wuerttemberg-Baden and Bavaria, the party is, by and large, free of chauvinism and does not make use of any

jingoistic appeal. In the other parts of Germany, with the possible exception of Bremen and Hamburg, the FDP includes some of the foremost promoters of nationalism. . . . In the Bundestag at least half of the FDP deputies may be classified as ultra-nationalists. About ten are considered to be followers of the political liberalism of Federal President Heuss. While the remainder of the non-nationalist group tend to support the Heuss wing on political questions, they vote with the nationalists on economic questions. The more moderate and progressive wing in the party is out-shouted by the radical right. It is they who take every opportunity to express themselves on various issues."

The Free Democratic party is, in a word, schizophrenic. About a third of its vote, according to the calculations of U.S. observers, comes from what must be considered non-nationalist, democratic-minded quarters; the rest from nationalists, militarists, chauvinists and neo-Nazis who were attracted during the early postwar years when parties of a nationalist cast were not licensed by the occupation powers. In many parts of Germany, the FDP was the most rightist political group to be found at that time.

As Allied influence grew weaker, the nationalist element in the FDP gained strength. From 1946 to 1950, the executive committee, or Vorstand, had a strong liberal majority. At the 1951 national convention, the liberals lost ground; but the seven-man committee still consisted of four liberals and three nationalists. But, in November 1952, the liberals were severely defeated. Of the seven members elected by the FDP convention at Bad Ems, four were out-and-out nationalists. The other three were middle-of-the-roaders, liberal only in contrast to their fellow committee members. As a concession to the liberal wing, it was decided that FDP Minister-Presidents of German states would be ex-officio members of the executive committee, so liberal Reinhold Maier was added to the group.

Another illustration of the nationalist strength in the FDP was the election of Dr. Friedrich Middelhaue as a Deputy Chairman. When Professor Theodor Heuss became West German president in 1949, his post as Party Chairman was given to an avowed conservative and spokesman for German economic nationalism, Franz Blucher. To balance the picture, Dr. Hermann Schafer, a member of the liberal wing, was chosen as Blucher's deputy. At the 1951 convention, the neo-Nazis in the FDP resolved to "neutralize" Schafer. They proposed that there be a second Deputy Chairman with equal rights, and nominated Middelhaue. At first the convention turned this idea down. When it became evident, however, that Schafer would have a difficult time winning re-election as sole Deputy Chairman, the convention decided to change the FDP statutes, and both men were elected. To understand the meaning of this move, it is necessary to know something of Friedrich Middelhaue.

## **Middelhaue and "the German Program"**

Middelhaue has excellent connections with the industrial tycoons of the Ruhr. He is Chairman of the FDP for the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, which includes the Ruhr. The party raises 73 per cent of its funds in this State. Much of Middelhaue's profitable business as print shop owner and publisher comes from Hugo Stinnes, Jr., son of one of Germany's leading industrialists.

Middelhaue's headquarters are in Oplanen, near Dusseldorf, where his publishing house is located. This office served as one of two major contacts between the Free Democratic party and the Naumann plotters, recently arrested by the British on charges of seeking to overthrow the German Federal Republic. Middelhaue's flat denial of this liaison has been disproved by conclusive evidence.

Middelhaue's advisers include men with notorious Nazi records. A prime example is Wolfgang Diewerge, who is connected with the FDP party paper in North Rhine-Westphalia, the *Deutsche Zukunft*. Diewerge was an SS officer, a Councillor in Goebbel's propaganda ministry, the author of several Nazi and anti-Semitic books, and one of those charged with political education in the Nazi party. Working in Middelhaue's office, Diewerge edited a propaganda manual for FDP functionaries, the *Redner Schnellbrief der FDP*. He also trained speakers in South Germany for FDP.

If Diewerge is an open anti-Semite (one of his books was entitled *Jews Are Agitating Against Germany*), Middelhaue himself is a barely concealed one. Early last year he assailed Ludwig Rosenberg, Foreign Affairs Secretary of the German Trade Union Federation, as an "immigrant" who was "intent upon carrying out the Morgenthau Plan" and who "should go back where he came from." German nationalists, like the Communists, have an Aesopian language of their own. Such phrases always refer to Jews.

As Chairman for North Rhine-Westphalia, Middelhaue has helped promote the comeback of former Nazis to municipal posts. One example is the election of Willi von Feld, an old-time Nazi, as town councillor and deputy mayor of Dabringhausen, near Oplanen. Von Feld, formerly assistant to the Nazi sports leader, von Tschammer und Osten, was employed by the FDP state paper, the *Deutsche Zukunft*.

Middelhaue and the *Deutsche Zukunft* were responsible for the drafting of the so-called German Program which was presented at the FDP national convention. The central thesis was that the FDP should be transformed into a rallying ground for nationalists of all shades of opinion. The program championed the cause of even the worst war criminals. It abounded in cliches favored by Hitler and Goebbels: "Germany's deepest humiliation"; "fresh



thinking"; "resolute action"; and other innocent-sounding catchwords with special meaning for old Nazis. The program failed to define its attitude toward the present form of government, carefully avoided the word democracy, advocated a strong presidential regime with a corporative second chamber.

Hans Fritzsche, the notorious former deputy to Dr. Goebbels and one of the defendants in the Nuremberg war-crimes trial, is generally credited with a hand in drafting the German Program. Middelhaue has admitted that Fritzsche went over it "from a propagandist's point of view." In opposition to this program, the liberal element of the FDP presented a *Liberal Manifesto* which reaffirmed democratic principles. Finally, neither proposal was accepted; probably to avoid splitting the party irrevocably. Nevertheless, there was no doubt that the Middelhaue ultra-nationalist group had scored a clear victory and put the liberals on the defensive. "This means a complete reversal of the balance of power within FDP" wrote the influential trade union paper, *Welt der Arbeit*. "The group around Dr. Middelhaue has triumphed" agreed the official German language daily of the U.S. High Commission, the *Neue Zeitung*.

That the liberal wing was neither completely disavowed, nor did not itself decide to leave in protest, was due to the coming elections. At odds on many issues, all sections nevertheless agree on the need for a more powerful centralized government, with less emphasis on states' rights; all object to anything that smacks of planned economy; all oppose granting labor an equal voice with management; all are wary of clerical influence, particularly that of the Catholic Church, in public affairs. Yet, should the present trend in the FDP continue, the liberals will be forced to withdraw in defense of their democratic principles.

What will be the party's future course? According to Middelhaue, "FDP will not permit itself to be confined in the old liberal mold, somewhere between the CDU and the Socialist Party. It must, instead, become the third big party, and it must take its stand on the right." This goal, he says, can be reached "only by turning the FDP into a rallying ground for nationalists of all shades of opinion, *preference being given to the recruiting of former Nazis.*"

### **The Deutsche Party**

The third and smallest coalition partner, the Deutsche Party, also suffers from a conflict of opinion in its own ranks. On the one hand, there is an old-line conservative wing, traditionally committed to states rights as against centralization and animated by a vague nostalgia for the "good old days" when Hanover was a separate kingdom. Historically, this wing descends from the old Guelph elements that supported the House of Hanover, dethroned by Bismarck in 1866. For a time, after World War II, the party was known as the

Lower Saxony State party; over 60 per cent of the 940,000 votes it received in the 1949 elections came from this region.

On the other hand, the party has undergone radical changes since the days when federalism and ultra-conservatism were the main attractions of its platform. The new outlook finds expression in a strong nationalist wing whose leaders were among the first in post-war Germany to reject the concept of war-guilt, to regard members of the anti-Hitler resistance movement as "traitors," to urge an independent German Army and to become the advocates of the German soldier.

Leader of the old conservative wing is Heinrich Hellwege, a sincere politician with a positive anti-Nazi record. The other wing is led by Federal Transport Minister Hans Christoph Seehofer, whose speeches often have reflected the ultra-nationalism typical of the Sudetenland, whence he came.

In the Deutsche party, as in the FDP, the ultra-nationalist group is gaining control. While Hellwege is nominally in command, it was apparent at the party conference at Goslar in October 1952, that Seehofer had outstripped him. Seehofer was nominated for the party leadership, defeating Hellwege by one vote; but he refused to accept the post. Thereupon Hellwege was re-elected by acclamation.

Seehofer's supporters include Dr. Derichweiler, co-Chairman of the DP for the State of Hesse, who served for a time as a Nazi youth leader; and the former Nazi Lord Mayor Krebs, who was elected to the Frankfurt City Council on the DP ticket in 1952. In February 1953, Krebs resigned from the DP; but the reasons for his action are not clear.

Illustrative of the new DP trend is the fact that the party held a meeting commemorating the founding of Bismarck's Reich in 1871. There were many such celebrations in West Germany—but the DP, after all, started as a federalist movement opposed to Bismarck's ideas. The meeting was "protected" by about 250 members of the Stahlhelm, all wearing army-type, field-grey uniforms with high black boots, black belts, and armbands. Both Federal and Allied directives forbade the wearing of party uniforms, but this prohibition did not appear to trouble the DP leadership.

### ***The Gesamtdeutscher Bloc (BHE)***

The great imponderable in the coming elections is the Gesamtdeutscher Bloc—known, before its name was changed in November 1952, as the BHE. This group represents the German refugees who left the territories east of the Oder-Niese line which were given to the Soviet Union and its satellite states at the end of the war. The party's primary purpose is to secure benefits for the

refugees. Therefore, it seeks to assert itself in the various state governments wherever possible.

The BHE was not on the scene during the 1949 elections because, under the Allied licensing of political parties, the refugees were unable to organize. However, predictions based on BHE's steady progress in state elections since 1950 give it more than 2 million votes in the coming national test. The party itself expects to corral 35-40 seats in the next Bundestag, assuming the 1953 election law does not significantly differ from that of 1949. Political observers agree that these expectations are not over-optimistic.

If such results are achieved, it is highly probable that BHE's help will be needed for any coalition other than that of the CDU-SPD. Thus far, the party is uncommitted; it has cooperated in local elections with virtually every other group and has succeeded in maintaining a flexible position without jeopardizing its own internal unity.

This pragmatic policy has, in a sense, immunized the refugees—potentially the most explosive element in the West German community—and kept them from joining the out-and-out neo-Nazi movements, such as the Socialist Reich Party.

But, by no means can the BHE be counted a champion of democracy. On the contrary, the political coloration of its leadership is markedly Nazi. The national head of the party, Waldemar Kraft, was a Nazi agent in pre-war Poland, a Nazi party member and SS captain during the German occupation of that country, and manager of the Reich Corporation for Agriculture. After the capitulation of Germany in 1945, the generally lenient British authorities judged Kraft so dangerous that they interned him for two years.

On the strength of the BHE vote, a man like Hans Ansbach, formerly Nazi supervisor in Pomerania and suspected of being a mass murderer when he was District Chief of the Ukraine, is now a cabinet minister of Schleswig-Holstein. His chief, Walther Bertram, is the first former Nazi to become head of a German state. Bertram won the Schleswig-Holstein post thanks to fifteen BHE electoral votes, combined with eight of the Free Democratic party and seven of the Deutsche party.

Last October, the BHE insisted on naming Dr. Karl Ott as State Secretary to the Lower Saxony Minister of the Interior. Ott had served for twelve years as Budget Director of Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry. Other known Nazis prominent in the BHE include: Dr. Stuckhart, who helped write the Nuremberg Laws and who represented the Ministry of the Interior at the "Grosse Wannsee" conference in Berlin, where the extermination of all European Jews was decided upon; Dr. Willi Guthsmuths and Professor Theodor Oberlander, both former Storm Troop leaders; and Hermann Ahrens, now Minister of

Economics and Transport in Lower Saxony and BHE floor leader in the state legislature, who joined the Nazi party in 1931 and later supervised the sensitive area of Watenstedt-Salzgitter, where the Hermann Goering works were located.

Now that the neo-Nazi Socialist Reich party has been outlawed, many of its adherents are supporting the BHE. In the November communal elections in Lower Saxony, stronghold of the SRP, analysis of the returns showed that well over a third of the former SRP vote went to the BHE. As a result, according to an official announcement by the rather cautious Lower Saxony Ministry of the Interior, at least eighty democratically-elected BHE Councillors are former Nazi party and SRP officers—among them Wilhelm Schepmann, last National Chief of the SA Storm Troops and a convicted war criminal who was recently ordered to stand trial once more for "crimes against humanity."

All in all, despite BHE's cooperation with other political parties for reasons of expediency, there can be little doubt as to where the sympathies of its leaders lie—a fact well recognized by former Nazis. Here is an opportunist party that will swing with the most favorable wind, and whose leadership is undesirable from a democratic point of view.

### **Factors to be Watched**

The threat posed in 1949 by the WAV, a party headed by Alfred Loritz, who was widely heralded as a coming Hitler, has disappeared. WAV, a heterogeneous refugee party that gained twelve seats in the 1949 elections, has practically disintegrated.

The Socialist Reich party led by General Remer, which gained prominence in local elections and seemed to be the first solid neo-Nazi party to arise after the war, has been dispersed by government edict.

The Bavarian party, which gained seventeen seats in 1949, probably will not suffer any great losses in 1953; but, while conservative in outlook, it is anti-chauvinist and relatively free from the danger of falling into the hands of nationalists.

Thus, the Free Democrats, the German Party and the Gesamtdeutscher Bloc (BHE), are the factors to be watched in the coming elections. These parties pose three major problems that bear on Germany's democratic future:

First, the problem of internal politics: support is needed by the conservative and liberal elements in order to forestall the moves of radical extremists and nationalists who are taking over control or threatening to do so.

Second, there is danger that at least two of these parties, joining a post-election government coalition, may give the West German Government a push toward nationalism, particularly if the elections strengthen their position as compared with that of Dr. Adenauer's party. It must be remembered that Dr.



Adenauer, an extremely astute political strategist and a strong personality, is now quite an old man; and the CDU does not appear to have groomed any prospective successor with sufficient stature to keep the rightist parties in line, as he has done.

Third, and perhaps most alarming of all, is the threat of an altogether new coalition composed of the three rightist parties. Such a parliamentary bloc would control, at a conservative estimate, 90-100 votes. It would press ultra-nationalist demands, both at home and abroad, in line with the cry of the BHE refugee adherents who actively seek the revision of Germany's frontiers. In view of the weakness of the other splinter parties of the radical right, such a coalition would provide a welcome rallying ground for homeless cohorts of the disbanded Socialist Reich party. The SRP may have disappeared, but its supporters have not.

Nationalist leaders of the Free Democrats and the Deutsche party have already made attempts to coordinate their policies, indicating that they are thinking in terms of a larger rightist bloc.

Four years ago, official U.S. analyses predicted that two of the three partners that make up the Bonn Government coalition, far from being foes of extreme nationalism in Germany, must be considered as its future allies. In the past two years, both parties have taken steps which would seem to justify this prediction.

Much light has been cast on the activities of the nationalists by the recent British exposure of the Naumann Plot. Let us, then, examine this revealing episode in some detail.

## **The Naumann Plot**

On January 14, 1953, the British authorities arrested seven prominent ex-Nazis, charging that they were propagating anti-Western views in the field of foreign affairs and plotting to regain control of West Germany. The British acted under the revised Occupation Statute, still in force though slated to be replaced, whereby an Allied occupation power could arrest Germans whom it deemed a threat to the security of Allied troops. Head of the conspiracy, according to the British, was Werner Naumann, a last-ditch Nazi who shared the air-raid bunker where Hitler committed suicide during the siege of Berlin, but who managed to escape capture by the Russian troops.

The plot laid to Naumann and his associates was not designed to take over the government by "putsch" or coup d'etat. Such action was hardly feasible with Allied troops stationed in Germany. Rather, the British charged, the Naumann group was seeking to return nazism to power through devious means: infiltration of the political parties; re-infection of old parties with Nazi ideologies; consummation of a fusion of the rightist groups, with the final aim of creating a one-party state; and cultivation of former SS generals and other anti-democratic leaders.

The Naumann plot, then, was a long-range and calculated scheme which, by its gradual nature, would not attract the sort of attention given to an overtly extremist neo-Nazi party.

The records of those arrested by the British are pertinent:

Werner Naumann was official deputy to Propaganda Minister Goebbels, with the rank of State Secretary. After his escape from Hitler's death bunker in 1945, he lived in the Soviet Zone of Germany for four or five years, but it is not known whether he concealed his identity from the Russians, or whether they knew who he was and sent him to West Germany in order to enlist Nazi support for Soviet aims.

Gustav Scheel served as Nazi Party Gauleiter and Reich governor for Salzburg and upper Austria; he was a four-star general of the SS and later in charge of security for all of Southwest Germany as well as for the French province of Alsace. Hitler's political testament, composed a few days before his suicide, named Dr. Scheel as Reich Minister of Education. He served a few years in labor camps after the war and is now an assistant physician in the Rautenberg Hospital at Hamburg.

Scheel, in the last few days of the war, found time to smuggle the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem into Switzerland, and has kept in touch with him. There are reports that the Grand Mufti has helped finance some of Scheel's activities. When, in February 1953, the West German government dissolved a "para-

military neo-Nazi" organization called the Freikorps Deutschland, a warrant was issued for the arrest of Scheel, already in prison.

Karl Kaufmann joined the Nazi party in 1921 and became its Rhineland boss. From 1923 to 1925, posing as a construction laborer, he organized sabotage against the French occupation of the Rhineland. From 1929 to 1945, he was Nazi Gauleiter for the city of Hamburg and, from 1933, Governor of the city-state of Hamburg. After confinement in a British internment camp, he was turned over to the German courts for action on his war crimes. As often happened, however, the German courts had no time to prosecute. Among evidence confiscated by the British in the Kaufmann home was a picture of the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, personally dedicated and dated December 22, 1952.

Karl Scharping, a brother-in-law of the notorious Nazi broadcaster, Hans Fritzsche, probably owed his appointment as a section chief in the Reich Propaganda Ministry to his family connections. He hewed undeviatingly to the Nazi line.

Paul Zimmerman, a general in the SS, was a high official in the department which supervised, administered and exploited all German concentration camps where so many millions perished. In recent years Zimmerman has been on the staff of the Advisory Bureau for Steel Utilization, a semi-official research bureau set up by Ruhr heavy industry.

Dr. Heinrich Haselmayer, a crony of Hitler, used to glory in his participation in the Munich Beer Hall putsch of 1923. In 1930, he obtained his M.D. with a doctoral dissertation on Racial Science and Sterilization. He was one of the most ardent advocates of widespread "eugenic" sterilization. In recent years he has been a practicing physician in a Hamburg suburb.

### ***Naumann's Connections with International Neo-Nazis***

International ties between neo-Nazi groups have been growing in number and in strength. In fact, although there have been efforts to set up a formal international network, it scarcely has been needed. Through more casual connections, the neo-Nazis have succeeded in helping war criminals to escape from Dutch and Norwegian prisons into hideouts in Germany; they have mounted an impressive campaign against ratification of the Israel-West German Agreement signed at The Hague; and they have molded German opinion on many other issues.

Thus, the Naumann group was not a formal organization with statutes, letterheads and membership groups, but an aggregation of sympathizers well acquainted with one another and working for common ends.

At the end of 1951, Werner Naumann became manager of an export-import firm, H. S. Lucht, located near Dusseldorf. Herbert Lucht, now dead, was a Belgian industrialist who lived in France during the German occupation.

He was on friendly terms with Naumann and Ernst Achenbach, both of whom were stationed in France on Reich business at that time—Naumann as a propaganda expert, Achenbach as legal counsel to Otto Abetz, Hitler's representative in France. Mrs. Lucht's family, the von Dievoets, supported the Rexist party of Leon Degrelle, the Belgian Fascist who is now in Argentina. Her father, a general, was one of Degrelle's friends. Naumann now runs the Dusseldorf firm for Lucht's widow; Achenbach, a top-notch lawyer, is the firm's legal counsel.

Naumann also has maintained connections with the widow of the man who, after Petain, was the symbol of Vichy France: Pierre Laval. The widow and her daughter, Mme. de Chambrun, have striven to justify Laval's Vichyite course. Both mother and daughter are known to have visited Mrs. Lucht in Dusseldorf. Achenbach, when legal advisor to Abetz, often worked with Laval.

The Lucht company was recently said to have received a major contract running into millions, for a mono-rail railroad in the Belgian Congo. The banker and developer of this enterprise was no other than Axel Wenner-Gren, the Swedish multi-millionaire who, because of his dealings with Nazi Germany, was blacklisted by the Allies during World War II.

The Lucht house appears to have business connections with Otto Skorzeny, the die-hard German commando leader who re-captured Mussolini from Allied troops after the Duce had been taken prisoner. According to some reports, Skorzeny is the Madrid business agent for Lucht. Naumann has maintained close contacts with Skorzeny, whose frequent trips from Spain to Germany have made him a likely international emissary for the neo-Nazis. Both Naumann and Skorzeny visited Egypt together recently, the British have revealed, to conclude contracts in that country.

Skorzeny, too, is a nephew by marriage of Hjalmar Schacht, the banking wizard who managed the finances of Hitler's Reich. Schacht recently secured permission to open a bank in Dusseldorf. Shortly before, in November 1952, he toured the Near East. At that time, Dr. Franz Boehm, chief of the German delegation at The Hague negotiations where Germany signed the restitution treaty with Israel, publicly accused Schacht of agitating against the Israeli-German agreement and of pledging aid to the Arab states in their fight against it.

The first Arab League delegation which came to Germany to protest The Hague agreement visited Dr. Naumann.

It is known that Naumann was supported by Hans Rudel, former Luftwaffe ace and ex-SS colonel, who lives in Argentina but frequently visits Germany. A leading figure in the large colony of former Nazis and Fascists who fled to the Argentine, Rudel also enjoys a great reputation among many German veterans' groups. Contacts with him were apparently made through Skorzeny,

who belongs to some of Rudel's veterans' groups, and also through Mrs. Lucht, Degrelle and Gustav Scheel.

Another Naumann plotter was Paul Zimmerman. One of Zimmerman's close friends is Wilhelm Voss, now living in Egypt, who heads a politico-military advisory staff, mostly composed of former SS and Wehrmacht men, in the service of the Egyptian authorities. Zimmerman visited Voss when he went to Egypt in the spring of 1952. Voss returned the visit in January 1953, when he came to Germany with the second Arab delegation which tried to prevent German ratification of The Hague Agreement.

Likewise a member of the Naumann group was Dr. Karl Friedrich Bornemann, former Hitler Youth Leader. Bornemann is known to have maintained close contact with Karl Heinz Priester, who has been spearheading efforts to establish a formal neo-Nazi international which would include such notorious persons as Per Engdahl of Sweden, Maurice Bardeche of France and de Marsanich of Italy. It is this group that issues from Coburg the leading international Fascist publication, *Nation Europa*.

These complex and far-flung relationships have proved profitable. On the eve of his departure for the United States, Chancellor Adenauer disclosed that the Naumann group had received money from its cohorts in Belgium, France, Spain and Argentina, and from the Mosley group in England.

### **The Naumann Group on the Local German Scene**

One of the first suspicious veterans groups to come to public attention in post-war Germany was the Brotherhood, founded in 1948. From the outset, its policy called for infiltration in other organizations. Thus, despite its small membership—not more than 2,500—the group seems to have had a finger in many of the more malodorous movements which have come into being in the past five years.

The Brotherhood's private organizational letters took the position that democracy constituted no defense for Western Europe; that there must be an independent Germany within its 1937 borders; that the Bonn government was not the "legitimate" spokesman of the German people; and that "the heart and future of the German Reich . . . lie . . . in the ruins of the Reich Chancellery."

Naumann was a member of the executive board of the Brotherhood, leaving it when the group started to attract attention. His co-conspirator, Karl Kaufmann, was characterized as "one of my best men" by the Brotherhood's national organizer, Helmut Beck-Brocksitter. Plotter Karl Friedrich Bornemann served as press chief to Francke-Grieksche, head of the Brotherhood's Eastern wing.

This wing, which advocated dealing with the Soviet Union instead of with the West, as the quickest way of rebuilding Germany's military strength, may

well have been a link between the Naumann Group and the Communists. Francke-Grieksche had numerous liaisons with the "National Front" group of ex-Wehrmacht officers in the Soviet Zone of Germany. In October 1952, a pro-Soviet espionage ring was discovered in West Germany; the head man, named Wehlen, was one of Francke-Grieksche's cohorts and had been "Chief of Counter-Espionage" for the Brotherhood. Francke-Grieksche, incidentally, disappeared into East Germany in 1951.

The Naumann group also was represented in the SS veterans' organizations. After the war, the SS had such a reputation for criminality that the regular Wehrmacht troops vigorously sought to disassociate themselves from the SS-men. Therefore, the SS set out to "rehabilitate" itself. Among the founders of the major SS veterans' group, the SS Hilfsgemeinschaft, were Scheel and Kaufmann. A close associate of Scheel in the quasi-military Freikorps Deutschland was the former Nazi Gauleiter for Austria, A. E. Frauenfeld, who also was arrested when the government dissolved the Freikorps.

It is interesting to note that, of about fifty former Reich Gauleiters, some thirty are believed dead; about ten are in prison or escaped from Germany; and about ten are at large in Germany today, one of whom seems to have sincerely repudiated Nazism. In addition to former Gauleiters Kaufmann, Scheel and Frauenfeld, two more were frequent visitors to the Naumann home: Joseph Grohe, former Gauleiter of Cologne, and Dusseldorf's F. K. Florian.

On the more "respectable" side of the ledger, were the Naumann group's connections with German heavy industry. Naumann, Zimmermann and Bornemann all had jobs that brought them into close relationship with leading businessmen. Moreover, Naumann organized two small private clubs for a hand-picked elite. One of these was the Friendship Circle for Business and Culture, which was financed by heavy industry and which furnished a forum where Nazi-minded executives and former top Nazis could meet and exchange ideas. The other, the Circle of Seventy, was a straight caucus group of unreconstructed Nazis.

In his political intriguing, Naumann seems to have had the financial backing of Gert Spindler, a wealthy textile manufacturer and the financial angel of many neo-Nazi groups. Spindler publishes a politico-economic weekly, *Der Fortschritt*, that openly advocates a corporate state similar to Mussolini's.

### **Naumann's Political Infiltration**

In seeking to infiltrate political parties, Naumann found the most favorable prospects in the Free Democratic Party. Here a pivotal figure was Dr. Ernst Achenbach, possessor of one of the keenest brains in Naumann's circle and a close personal friend. In 1950, Achenbach became one of the four executive committee members of the Brotherhood, at a time when Naumann was also a

member. In January 1953, when the latter was arrested, Achenbach undertook his defense.

As Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman, Achenbach helped shape the Free Democratic Party's national policy. Together with Middelhaue, he was co-chairman of the FDP in the State of Rhine-Westphalia. This post gave him a hand in selecting many former Nazis as local FDP candidates for political office. Achenbach was one of Middelhaue's staunchest supporters in his fight to control the party.

Achenbach now occupies another crucial position. He is co-Chairman of the Committee to Secure a General Amnesty for War Criminals, serving with FDP Bundestag Deputy Dr. Erich Mende. As party contact man with the veterans' groups, Dr. Mende considers himself the spokesman for the "front-line" generation.

Assisting Achenbach in his law office at Essen is Dr. Werner Best, full SS General, at one time the third ranking man after Himmler and Heydrich in the Gestapo, and Hitler's commissioner in Denmark during the war. Achenbach also maintains close ties with propagandist Hans Fritzsche, and was probably one of those who urged that Fritzsche edit the ultra-nationalist German Program which Middelhaue's group urged at the last FDP convention.

Another Middelhaue advisor, Wolfgang Diewerge, was a frequent visitor to Naumann's home.

Insofar as the Deutsche party is concerned, it should be remembered that that nationalist wing of that party and the Middelhaue-Achenbach element of the FDP held negotiations aimed at forming a "National Right" coalition, at least in the states of Rhine-Westphalia and Hesse. Here the link with the Naumann group appears to have been the Deutsche party district leader from Hesse, Dr. Derichsweiler. Under Hitler, Derichsweiler succeeded Dr. Scheel, second leading figure of the Naumann group, as Youth Leader. Liaison in Hesse was particularly easy because the Free Democratic party leader for that area is another outspoken neo-Nazi, August Martin Euler, who cooperates with Middelhaue to strengthen the ultra-nationalists in the FDP.

It should not be supposed that infiltration by the Naumann group required great effort. Often, the plotters were courted by political leaders. A few days before Naumann's arrest, Waldemar Kraft, national chairman of the Gesamt-deutscher Bloc (BHE), visited Naumann, reportedly to ask financial support for his party. Another contact with the BHE was one of Kraft's aides former SS General Gille.

It was rare indeed that Naumann was rebuffed. "One of the most disquieting symptoms of the whole affair," wrote the influential French paper, *Le Monde*, "is that nowhere were his propositions met with any indignation, or even a simple refusal to reply."



### **Reaction to the Naumann Plot**

The British action in arresting the Naumann plotters caused considerable excitement in Germany and even more outside. The reaction in West Germany was almost universally hostile. Federal Government circles were unhappy because they had not been consulted by the British. Informed rather casually after the event, they argued that they could have handled the situation themselves. Dr. Adenauer and his party felt the repercussions might affect ratification of the European Defense Community, and questioned whether the British were pursuing political plans of their own.

The Social Democrats, after promptly endorsing the British move, reversed their position ten days later when SDP's Carlo Schmid, Deputy Speaker of the Bundestag, lashed out ferociously against the British in an obvious bid for Nazi votes. He inveighed against subjecting former high-ranking Nazis "within democratic political parties" to discriminatory treatment.

The right-wing, industry-supported newspapers immediately lambasted the British. They drew a picture of "perfidious Albion," jealous of German recovery, afraid of competing German exports, particularly to Arab countries, and wary of a German-U.S. alliance to the exclusion of Britain.

By the middle of February, however, the nationalist elements in the Free Democratic party were under heavy attack. A paper close to Dr. Adenauer, the *Koelnische Rundschau*, one of the main CDU organs, strongly criticized Middelhaue's "open-door" policy to former Nazis, comparing him to Hugenberg, who in the 1920's helped bring Hitler to power, and warned against under-rating the Naumann group and similar neo-Nazi organizations. The Social Democrats emphasized the Nazi stigma on Dr. Adenauer's coalition partners. As information about the plotters leaked out, Dr. Hellwege, head of the Deutsche party and one of the party's more moderate wing, felt his position strengthened; he ousted Ludwig Schecht, State Chairman of North Rhine-Westphalia, who had been supporting the joint "National Right" action sponsored by Middelhaue and Euler.

Since the most damaging revelations dealt with the Naumann group's connections with the Free Democratic party, a stiff internal battle soon ensued. Despite protestations both by Middelhaue and Euler that the British allegations were untrue, a three-man investigating committee was established by the FDP. The committee was headed by the Federal Minister of Justice, Thomas Dehler. In the past, Dehler has striven to keep both wings of the FDP working together. It is noteworthy that the evidence presented by the British authorities was strong enough to cause him to change his attitude. He has come out with sharp attacks against the nationalist wing of the FDP.

Certainly, the airing of the Naumann plot was of considerable assistance to

the more liberal wing of the FDP in its fight with the nationalists. A number of steps were taken by the party, at the end of April, to sever ties between the nationalists and the now-embarrassing Naumann group, and to root out some of the extremists.

Thus, Achenbach, who had exposed himself by becoming Naumann's legal counsel, was ousted as Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman. Important FDP leaders like Dehler and Vice-Chancellor Bluecher had urged Achenbach to resign, but this he flatly refused to do. After his removal, however, Achenbach decided to resign as Naumann's lawyer as well.

There was some censure of Middelhaue by the party's executive committee and by local groups in his own state; but he retains his post as FDP state chairman.

The FDP debated the case of Wolfgang Diewerge who was one of the leading Naumann-FDP links. Diewerge, it was revealed, had resigned from his editorship of the *FDP Schnellbriefe*. Action also was taken against Doering, the managing director of the FDP machinery in North Rhine-Westphalia. Dr. Anton Schifferer, a member of the state executive committee in Schleswig-Holstein, was expelled for "actions detrimental to the FDP."

The executive committee of the FDP stated that it would "permit no doubts to exist about its ruling that any ideological or political connections with anti-democratic circles are irreconcilable with the duties of a member of the Free Democratic Party," and ordered its party chairman to take "decisive action." Press reports have featured FDP "purges" of ex-Nazis, which the party seems to be publicizing to attract some labor support in the coming Federal elections.

Less publicized, however, have been other FDP developments which demonstrate that the nationalist wing is still doing quite well.

In December 1952, for example, Ernst Mayer, Deputy Chairman of the FDP's delegation in the Bundestag, died. His position was equivalent to that of deputy floor-leader. Mayer was a Swabian, a member of the FDP's liberal wing. The man chosen as his successor—after the Naumann plot was uncovered—was Euler, the nationalist wing's most prominent and outspoken protagonist in the American Zone of Germany.

Recently, Frederick Schramm—who was Reichshandwerkmeister, or boss of all the artisans in Germany, under the Hitler regime—was given a jail sentence by a Hamburg Court for having carried on the work of the government-dissolved, openly neo-Nazi Social Reich party. In the course of the proceedings it was disclosed that the Free Democratic party in Schleswig-Holstein had asked Schramm to run for election to the Bundestag.

In Bavaria, the state party convention of the FDP in April 1953, showed a definite shift toward the right. The nationalist wing succeeded in unseating former Deputy State Chairman Anton Besold, replacing him with Bundestag

Deputy Fruehwald. Before 1933, Fruehwald was a state deputy of the *Deutsch-nationale Volkspartei* which represented the conservative nationalists who made a coalition with Hitler, enabling him to take over the government. Fruehwald's election was taken as evidence that the FDP's doors were open to former Volkspartei members.

The increasing influence of military elements in the Bavarian FDP was evident in a number of convention resolutions calling for the right to wear all former German war medals, the Federal President being empowered to decide whether swastikas could appear on the medals; the integration of German labor units into the future European Defense Community army; and the establishment of Alpine troops within the EDC units.

When Achenbach was fired as National Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman of the FDP, this post was given to Dr. Grimm, an ardent defender of German war criminals since the 1920's and, more important, a legal hatchet man for the Third Reich. In 1924, on behalf of Germany, Grimm signed the Agreement on General Amnesty for War Criminals, in London. In 1933, he acted as legal counsel for the Third Reich against Jews in Cairo, Egypt, who were trying to recover confiscated properties. Later, Grimm served as counsel for the Reich in the trial of Grynzpan, who assassinated the Third Secretary of the German embassy in Paris, in protest against the Reich's anti-Jewish measures. Grimm served in the same capacity at the Gustloff Trial, a similar case that occurred in Chur, Czechoslovakia.

Who was Grimm's assistant in Cairo, in Chur, in Paris? None other than Diewerge. In 1951, together with Achenbach, Grimm helped found the Dusseldorf Committee for a General Amnesty for German War Criminals; and, when the Naumann plot broke, it was Grimm who undertook the defense of Naumann plotter Paul Zimmerman.

Finally, the task of cleaning the non-democratic elements out of the North Rhine-Westphalia Free Democratic party framework was left to Middelhaue.

Government officials, like Minister of Justice Dr. Thomas Dehler, now term the Naumann plotters "an acute danger" for the future of democracy in West Germany. But there is little evidence of such a shift in West German public opinion. The British disclosures are still generally regarded as an attempt to thwart legitimate German aspirations and as intrusions in an area where Germany should have full internal sovereignty. To a certain extent, these feelings were assuaged when the British turned over the prosecution of the plotters to the West German Government.

The most reliable gauge of German opinion will be found in the election returns—for instance in the size of the FDP vote in nationalist-controlled areas. Meanwhile, however, there is other tangible evidence indicating that German opinion has shifted in favor of the ultra-nationalists and neo-Nazis.

## **Disquieting Signs in German Public Opinion**

In Germany today, the "strong men" and what they represent are again popular. Frederick the Great, Hindenburg and Bismarck are held up as shining examples—not just by neo-Nazis and veterans' groups, but by men who should know better. There were, for instance, numerous celebrations in January 1953, to commemorate the founding of Bismarck's Reich. At one such celebration, sponsored by the German Students Association, Dr. Hermann Ehlers, president of the Bundestag and leader of the Protestants in the CDU, was the principal speaker.

Ehlers sharply criticized what he called abuse of the principle of the Reich by Hitler and the Nazis. He hailed Prussia's role in the unification of Germany and called for the Prussian "right of self determination" to restore the state which the Allied Control Council dissolved in 1945.

Minister of Justice Thomas Dehler has made similar speeches. And the Gesamtdeutscher Bloc (BHE) frequently proclaims that one of its aims is to imbue the Federal Republic with the spirit of Prussia. German "centralists," in their campaign to do away with small, local units which are close to the electorate and the common citizen, constantly laud the "economy and cleanliness" of highly concentrated Prussian administration as a means to "bring about order everywhere."

Other, more visible signs show this line of thinking. Dueling fraternities have made something of a comeback. Military march music and military comedy films are popular. Streets are being renamed: one Lower Saxony town recently decided to memorialize the Prussian victory at Sedan; another changed the name of a street that honored a member of the group that tried to assassinate Hitler.

In the blueprint for the German Army that is supposed to come into being with the European Defense Community, the concept of "citizen soldier," popular only recently, now seems to be fading away in favor of the more traditional patterns of strong discipline and "military honor."

The Shadow Defense Ministry of the German Federal Republic, dating back to December 1950, and headed by Herr Theodor Blank, is preparing to raise twelve divisions for the European Army. Blank gives the impression that he is sincere in his efforts to democratize and reform the old Prussian military system. But he has been subjected to stiff pressures in the other direction. While the "reform" group in his cabinet has been fighting for a "civilian army," the adherents of military efficiency and effectiveness have pointed to the time element: twelve divisions must be raised as soon as possible. Moreover, the EDC Treaty provides that almost 500,000 German troops must be recruited within two years after ratification, whereas a force of only 250,000 Germans was originally contemplated. German democrats are apprehensive that a sharp

screening and selection of applicants with a view to democratic reliability will not be possible.

This uneasiness was increased when the Federal Cabinet suggested the establishment of a personnel screening committee of fifteen, which would include only five civilians; and when it became known that three rather stubborn representatives of the old Prussian traditions—Generals von Luettwitz, von Gersdorf and von Boeselager—were chosen to select officers.

Finally, there is the German belief, expressed by the newspaper *Die Zeit*, that "the Americans . . . want those German soldiers whose acquaintance they made during the last war and who caused them so much trouble." This impression was strengthened recently when former German officers were invited to watch U.S. Army maneuvers and to examine the latest American equipment.

In the fall of 1952, there were signs of a crisis in the Shadow Ministry; two of the "reform group" resigned.

In the economic field, "Restoration" was recently exemplified by the decision of the German parliament to revive the rigid guild system for German artisans, whereby anyone entering a trade in which there is a guild must get permission from his prospective competitors. A severe apprenticeship for artisans also works to the advantage of established craftsmen. American representatives in Germany had fought to abolish this system as being anti-democratic and preventing free competition.

In the field of government, despite all Allied pressure, the Germans have failed to establish a decent civil service law. Today the Beamten—or civil servants—have been almost universally restored. Clinging to the same mentality that made them willing tools of the Kaiser and Hitler, they have recovered much of their ancient status in the German community. Similarly, the return to the German Foreign Office of former Wilhelmstrasse personnel has been defended by Chancellor Adenauer as necessary for the efficiency of the Foreign Office. Some of the worst of the former Nazis were removed after investigation.

Other Government-sponsored acts have demonstrated a traditionalist and authoritarian outlook that harks back to the patriarchal state, where officials knew best and citizens were children to be taken care of.

For example, a Draft Law was worked out last year to lay down the rights and obligations of German journalists. Strong opposition, particularly by the independent press established through Military Government licenses in the American Zone, helped create an almost unanimous negative reaction to this measure.

Minister of the Interior Lehr has been attempting for quite a while to create some sort of Federal Radio System whereby broadcasting would come under his department's complete control. This project, too, has not materialized.

There were plans to establish a Technische Nothilfe, something like a Mobile Guard, such as existed in Weimar days. Trade Unions have opposed this move, fearing that a reactionary government might use such a body to crush strikes and other legitimate demonstrations. For similar reasons, there has been opposition to Lehr's attempts to double the strength of the Federal Frontier Guard.

Finally, not a little disdain has been expressed for the democratic form of government in Germany, as a result of the battle for approval of the European Defense treaties. In his desire to get the Bonn-Paris agreements ratified, Chancellor Adenauer induced Federal President Huesse to withdraw his request for an advisory opinion from the Constitutional Court on the validity of the proposed agreement. This step seriously damaged the Court's prestige. The battle over ratification—not yet over—and the tangled parliamentary tactics and complications it has produced, have diminished the German's respect for the democratic system.

### ***The War Criminals Issue***

"Restoration" means, as one competent observer in Germany has expressed it, that Germans are again "looking upon Germany as the navel of the world and upon Germans as the most orderly, diligent and efficient, but also the most sinned-against, people on earth." In this climate of opinion, the veterans' groups, the Waffen SS, and the war criminals also have been struggling for "restoration"—of their pensions, privileges and reputation.

It can be categorically stated that, with a few minor exceptions, the Wehrmacht, the SS and the war criminals have won their battle in the eyes of the German people. The majority are convinced of the innocence of the war criminals. They feel that the Allies sentenced them not for any reasons of justice, but because they were victims of defeat.

In 1945, Germans emphatically protested against any concept of collective guilt and argued that only the Nazis and some military leaders were responsible for the horrible deeds of the past. Today these same men, who were then blamed by public opinion, are treated as national heroes. Released war criminals are feted; those still in prison are often named as honorary presidents of veterans' groups.

Although some 75 per cent of all the war criminals held in countries outside of Germany, and some 2,700 of the major offenders held inside by the Allies have now been released, German opinion is by no means satisfied. Detention of the rest is denounced as Allied injustice. Many Germans customarily refer to war criminals as "prisoners of war." Newspapers cite the "inhuman treatment" of prisoners in Holland and other countries, although they are treated normally

or even better than their fellow-inmates. Former British High Commissioner Ivone Kirkpatrick and former American High Commissioner Walter Donnelly have been sharply criticized for calling attention to war crimes committed by Germans, and for refusing to support pleas for a general amnesty.

The Deutsche party and the Free Democratic party have made the greatest political capital out of this issue, often threatening not to support the European Defense Community unless all war criminals are first freed. When two Germans escaped from Dutch prisons, one of them, Wilhelm Kappe, was caught in North Germany after a man named Heidepeter set the police on his trail. Heidepeter was a Social Democratic City Councillor in the town of Aurich. The SDP, feeling it could not fight the strong nationalist trend, especially powerful in Lower Saxony, expelled Heidepeter from the party. The Federal Minister of the Interior had to assure the German parliament, where inquiries were made about the escaped Dutch prisoners, that as soon as the Federal police discovered that the two men were escaped war criminals, they stopped searching. Thus, it was emphasized, the German FBI had not made itself the agent of a foreign power.

Dr. Adenauer, fighting to get the Allied-German treaties through the Bundestag, thought it necessary to use strong words of praise for "the good reputation and the great achievements of the German soldier . . . (that) will remain alive despite all the detraction suffered during past years." While disclaiming any intention to plead for an amnesty for "anti-social and criminal elements," he pledged increased efforts to obtain the release of detained Germans.

The demand for a general amnesty, based on what might be called a German feeling for the "collective innocence" of war criminals, dwells mainly on three arguments:

First, an amnesty would improve Allied-German relations. Actually, as the former British High Commissioner pointed out, many of the prisoners released, such as General Ramcke, immediately used their freedom to attack the Allies.

Second, no German could be expected to put on a uniform again while "his comrades" remain in jail. This argument has been frequently raised by Herr Blank, head of the Shadow Defense Ministry. Yet there seems to be no dearth of German volunteers for semi-military organizations, such as the Federal Frontier Guard; or of officers willing to serve.

Third, the Americans in Korea have committed "the same crimes" for which Germans were condemned at Nuremberg; and members of the French Foreign Legion—largely made up of Germans—are now compelled to commit "similar crimes" in Indo-China. This contention typifies the growing attitudes of resentment and defiance: Germany has been the victim of the Versailles

Treaty, the "spirit of Nuremberg," the Morgenthau policy, the Potsdam Agreement.

In short, the German war crimes are now regarded as grossly exaggerated—part of a plot to keep Germany divided, impoverished and weak.

### **The Tendency to "Whitewash" Germany: An Encouragement to the Neo-Nazis**

"Restoration" is not necessarily a neo-Nazi frame of mind; indeed, many Germans who hold Restoration views are staunchly anti-Nazi. But in the urge to return to former ways, much of the stigma once attached to Hitlerism is glossed over, or excused. Former Nazis no longer are regarded as pariahs; instead, they are "good Germans" in the eyes of most of their neighbors.

The prevailing mood has encouraged neo-Nazis to promote their old familiar doctrines among the general population. In fact, many of the writers who helped pave the way for Hitler and his ideas, or who flourished under the Nazi regime, are again back in business.

One example is Hans Grimm whose *People Without Space* which appeared in the 1920's did yeoman service for the concept of "Lebensraum." Grimm's post-war writings lay the blame for World War II on the "warmongering of world Jewry, acting in a spirit of defensive hatred."

Bruno Brehm, one of the most popular novelists of the Hitler era, has recently published *The Edge of the Abyss—From Lenin to Truman*, which describes political events of the last three decades with a strong pro-Nazi bias.

Guenthers, the propagandist who edited the racial guidebook that was required reading for every Hitler Youth leader, SS and Nazi Party functionary, is again on the German book market with *The Forms and Origins of Marriage*, advocating that family life center around the father as the household "fuehrer."

One of the clearest mouthpieces of the neo-Nazis themselves is the Coburg magazine, *Nation Europa*, the leading neo-Nazi publication. Following is an excerpt from an article entitled "Where Are the Former National Socialists?" by Heinz Siepen, who is now interned in Werl Prison as a war criminal:

"The disappearance of Nazi organizations is not synonymous with the disappearance of the old National Socialists. . . . To a small extent they are politically active again. We find them in almost all parties. As a whole, however, their mood is still one of alertness, of expectation, of vigilantly watching the policies followed by the rulers of today. Up to now they have not gathered in any one organization. Although the tie which held them together through the force of a single personality no longer exists, they still have a great deal in common. This is primarily the feeling of having served a cause which, in reality, was very different from the picture presented at the trial of war criminals in



Nuremberg. It is also the awareness of having participated in such great social efforts as the Strength Through Joy, the Autobahn, the Mother and Child, and others. In addition, they feel united in rejecting the excesses of some of the most unpleasant phenomena, which can never be avoided in revolutionary movements. They all know that they prognosticated the developments of the world situation much more correctly than the famous 'Big Four' and that so-called anti-fascism never served any other purpose than to be a tool of Bolshevism. They realize that many of our present-day statesmen were fooled by this maneuver. The former National Socialists are further united by the realization that our internal political recovery can only come about as a result of a resolution of the concepts of unlimited individualism and the collectivist drive, and that the idea that the collective good should take priority over individual welfare is, and remains, a desirable aim. They do not desire (their own) restoration, but are striving for the unity of our people and for the renaissance of the Reich as a force for order in the center of Europe, and as a wall of protection for our part of the world vis-a-vis the East."

The basic Nazi themes are rung one after the other in the lines cited above: Nuremberg gave a false picture of Germany; Hitler did a lot of good; the bad could not be avoided; the Nazis were right, the democrats wrong in their foreign policy; fascism was misunderstood because of the Communist propaganda against it; the welfare of the state must come before that of the individual; Germany must be reunited and built up once more and become the arbiter of Europe.

### ***The Opinion Poll of Present German Attitudes***

On January 18, 1953, the Reactions and Analysis Staff of the Public Affairs Department of the United States High Commissioner's Office for Germany (HICOG) released the results of a public opinion survey made in West Germany at the end of 1952. The survey dealt mainly with the current status of neo-nazism, and the question of restitution to Jews.

Publication of the results, coming almost simultaneously with the arrest of the Naumann plotters, aroused a storm of protest in Germany. The Government rather indignantly asked HICOG for an explanation. On January 19, Dr. Adenauer declared that the survey did not "represent a political report by the U.S. High Commission" and spoke of a false interpretation of its results. A HICOG spokesman, stating that the conclusions drawn did not constitute HICOG's opinion, likewise declared that the meaning of the survey had been "interpreted in a most fatal way."

According to the findings, the percentage of Germans who think that there was more good than evil in nazism has risen from 34 per cent to 44 per cent

between May 1951, and December 1952. The proportion of those who consider nazism more evil than good has remained almost constant; 40 per cent in May 1951; 39 per cent in December 1952. No opinion was expressed by 26 per cent in 1951, by 17 per cent at the end of 1952.

Among the German youth, 18-24 years of age, pro-Nazi sentiment has increased, 49 per cent seeing more good than evil in nazism, 29 per cent holding the opposite view, and 22 per cent expressing no opinion.

Of those questioned, 58 per cent believe that former Nazis should have the same opportunities for advancement in business and politics as other Germans; but only 36 per cent are disposed to extend such opportunities to former Nazi leaders.

Reacting to the statement of former Paratroop General Ramcke that the list of German war criminals was an honor roll, and that the Allies were the real criminals with their bombing of women and children, 31 per cent agreed and an additional 25 per cent termed the statement wrong in part. Only 25 per cent expressed unqualified disapproval.

On the other hand, only 19 per cent went along with General Remer's statement that the plotters who sought to take Hitler's life were traitors to Germany; 58 per cent disagreed.

On the subject of nationalism, the conclusions state: "Using the term nationalism in the sense of the opposite of internationalism, the results of the present study suggest . . . there has been a significant rise in nationalism among the German public. Attitudes have shifted from preponderantly internationalist in the middle of 1951 to preponderantly nationalist in late 1952."

Almost half the Germans questioned, 47 per cent, want a West German national army; 22 per cent favor integration of German divisions in a European army. Says the survey report: A majority state that "they would like to see West Germany 'the strongest country' in Western Europe and a preponderance hold that in fact West Germany is entitled to play the leading role in the Europe of the future."

The poll could be—and was—attacked on many grounds, such as insufficient sampling and unsuitability of the particular questions chosen to test attitudes. Yet the technique employed was no innovation. For several years, U.S. authorities have sponsored surveys similarly conducted by a German institute, and have publicized the findings. Now, however, for the first time, figures have been issued comparing old and new reactions, which make the results more striking. Furthermore, the release came at a politically sensitive moment.

Allowing for margins of error claimed by the critics, it would still appear that the pollsters put their fingers on a real trend in Germany, especially when the returns are examined in the light of other signs of public opinion.

## West German Attitudes Toward the Jews

Since anti-Jewish agitation was a prime objective of the Nazi regime, the post-war attitude of Germans toward Jews often is viewed as a yardstick whereby German progress toward democratic ideas may be measured.

Psychologically speaking, the great majority of Germans have not acknowledged what the Third Reich did to Jews, and do not wish to do so. There is a tendency to avoid the subject altogether.

While this is true in the main, there are recurrent rumblings of anti-Semitism on the extreme right. It should be remembered that only two years ago, expression of anti-Semitism, even by extremists, was snide and covert. A year ago, attacks on alleged Jewish "influences" cropped up in neo-Nazi articles dealing with other subjects. In the last year, openly anti-Semitic literature has begun to reappear in Germany.

For example, an issue of the neo-Nazi *Nation Europa*, devoted entirely to the "Jewish question," contains many articles that might well have appeared in Nazi organs before 1945. Jewry is depicted as a "nation among nations," meaning that Jews are incapable of integration in any national community, such as Germany. Thus, it is the Jews who are the true racists.

One Dusseldorf publishing house, reported by the usually well-informed newspaper *Freies Wort* to have connections with anti-Semitic Einar Aberg in Sweden, has published a pamphlet entitled *Wise Men of Zion* which, fantastically, accuses Jews of having arranged for their own murders in order to be able, after the war, to extirpate others by means of war trials. In another brochure, *Demon Money*, Jews are held responsible for financial speculation, inflation and a host of other evils. Similar ideas are expressed in a tract entitled *On the Everyday Life of the "Divine World Order."*

When such writings appear in other countries, they may often be discounted as the ravings of the "lunatic fringe." In Germany, however, pamphlets of this kind take on particular import; for one cannot disregard the facts of German history. There is always the danger that anti-Semitic concepts will again constitute a plank of an important political platform in Germany.

An example of how neo-Nazi anti-Semitic themes gain currency is the persistent campaign to minimize the number of Jews who perished at German hands. It is now claimed that "only" 1½ million Jews, at the most, were victims of nazism—the rest is all Jewish exaggeration. This thesis was taken up by the popular German reprint magazine *Die Auslese* which carried an article on the subject from *Der Fortschritt*, one of the leading pro-Nazi publications.

On the positive side of the ledger, when Israeli representatives in Germany

issued a release showing in detail how 6 million Jews had perished at the hands of the Third Reich, this rebuttal was given wide circulation by a good part of the German press. There also has been firm excoriation of anti-Semitism by leading German political figures, such as Federal President Theodor Heuss. There is a consciousness among responsible German officials that anti-Semitism must be fought. And there is the work of certain democratic groups to promote better understanding, which will be discussed later.

### **West Germany and The Hague Agreements**

In 1952, a delegation from the West German Government met with representatives of Israel and of Jewish organizations at The Hague, Holland. In a series of treaties, West German representatives agreed to three major undertakings:

First, to pay Israel 3,000 million Deutsche Marks (about \$715 million) in recognition of Israel's heavy burden in resettling "so great a number of uprooted and destitute Jewish refugees from Germany and from territories formerly under German rule. . . ."

Second, to pay the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany 450 million Deutsche Marks (about \$107 million), in order to make available, for the rehabilitation of surviving Jews, part of the heirless assets and other unrecovered funds belonging to Jews who perished at Nazi hands.

Third, to pass certain legislation in West Germany to redress some of the Nazi wrongs, and to improve existing legislation for indemnification of private individuals.

The Hague treaties could not become effective until approved by the German parliament. Therefore, Chancellor Adenauer made ratification one of the main planks of his legislative program.

The first two parts of the agreement—payment to Israel and to the Conference on Jewish Material Claims—were approved by a vote of 239-35. This notable majority may be attributed to Chancellor Adenauer's firm stand and that of the Social Democratic party, which threw all of its parliamentary strength behind the move to ratify.

West Germany accepted the treaties in the face of an Arab boycott threat which, if effective, might have had serious repercussions on Germany's foreign trade.

However, opposition to ratification was greater than the 239-35 vote indicates. There were 86 abstentions and 41 absentees. Members of the major parties voted as follows:

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Abstained</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Socialists .....	125	.....	.....	15
Christian Democrats .....	80	.....	23	15
Christian Social Union .....	4	5	16	3
Free Democrats .....	17	5	19	8
Deutsche Party .....	5	5	10	.....

Among the remainder of the Bundestag, there were 8 votes for, 20 against (including 13 Communist votes), 18 abstentions and 10 absentees.

Within the Government coalition, there were 106 votes for, 15 against, 68 abstentions and 26 absentees. In other words, a majority of the coalition legislators either opposed ratification or refused to vote on the issue. While Adenauer succeeded in keeping Christian Democrats from voting against the agreement, about one-third of the CDU members avoided taking a stand.

The Government is now preparing to submit the legislative program for restitution and indemnification which was agreed upon at The Hague. It is expected that the vote on this measure will be substantially the same as the line-up on the treaties already ratified.

There is some evidence that the German people are lagging behind their legislators in accepting responsibility for the Third Reich's acts against Jews. The persons questioned by HICOG were asked to choose one of three statements of opinion:

1. Germans in general need not feel guilty or responsible for righting any wrongs to the Jews; only those who really committed such wrongs are guilty as well as responsible.
2. Not every German needs to feel guilty; but everyone should feel a responsibility to right the wrongs Germany did to the Jews.
3. Every individual German bears a certain guilt for what Germany did to the Jews.

Approximately 59 per cent agreed with the first statement, 29 per cent with the second, 5 per cent with the third, and 7 per cent had no opinion.

When the question was posed in more practical terms, the results were revealing: 49 per cent felt that the Israeli-German restitution agreement should be rejected; 26 per cent thought that the Bundestag should accept it; 25 per cent had no opinion.

When told that the Arab League had threatened to break off trade relations with Germany if the restitution agreement were ratified, only 12 per cent took the position that restitution should have prior consideration.

## **Democratic Forces in West Germany**

What are the democratic forces in the battle that has been joined for eventual control of West Germany?

First, the past year has shown that there are democratic and constitutional means by which neo-nazism can be severely damaged and organized neo-Nazi groups eliminated.

Moreover, there is a tendency to overlook strong democratic influences inherent in the very operation of parliamentary government which, being normal and unspectacular, do not attract much attention. Late in 1951, democratic processes were strengthened by the establishment of a Federal Constitutional Court which has made itself felt during the past year in the fight against totalitarian groups.

There are major bodies in West Germany—such as the trade unions and the independent press—which wage particularly strong ideological warfare against the neo-Nazis. Furthermore, there are a number of smaller private and voluntary organizations which show a firm resolution not to tolerate a Nazi comeback.

The end of 1952 and the beginning of 1953 were marked by a number of Government actions—both Federal and state—against certain of the more noxious neo-Nazi groups. The most important of these moves was the dissolution, in October 1952, of the Socialist Reich party.

### ***The Dissolution of the SRP***

The licensing of political parties was discontinued by the Western Allies in 1949. Shortly thereafter, the Socialist Reich party came into existence. Although it was clear, almost from the start, that the SRP was anti-democratic and modeled itself on the Nazi party, nothing was done by the authorities until May 1951, when the Government banned the SRP's Reichsfront Order units, patterned after Hitler's Brownshirts. In October 1952, the Federal Constitutional Court declared that the SRP was an unconstitutional party, and ordered it disbanded. Said the Court: "Parties which, according to their aims and the conduct of their members, seek to impair or abolish the libertarian democratic basic order, or to jeopardize the existence of the Federal Republic of Germany, are unconstitutional. . . ."

This was a crucially significant step. For the SRP was the first strong, well-directed neo-Nazi party to emerge from the welter of rabid nationalist splinter groups. It could have acted as a strong pole of attraction for all openly neo-Nazi elements. Equally important, the Government proved that it possessed the necessary means and procedures to check such groups, and could act expeditiously and efficiently within a democratic framework.

SRP leaders had decided to disband their party a month before the Court handed down its decision. First, they probably hoped to avoid a formal ban, which they felt would be forthcoming. Second, the SRP planned to transform its representatives in the various legislatures into "independents," so that any eventual ban would not affect them. Third, the party preferred to pursue at its own rate of speed, rather than the Government's, its plans for going underground or appearing in another form.

Ignoring the SRP's tactical dodges, the Court handed down a noteworthy opinion. Not only did it disband the SRP and declare the party unconstitutional; it also prohibited the creation of substitute organizations for the SRP and voided the Federal and state (but not local) seats held by SRP representatives or obtained on the SRP ticket. The press response to the Court's verdict was overwhelmingly favorable.

Fritz Dorls, German parliament member who was an SRP leader, declared that the Court's decision did not affect him, since he had been elected on another party ticket, and later switched to the SRP, and was no longer an SRP member in view of the fact that the party had been disbanded. But the Federal parliament, like the Court, would have none of this dodging and voted to cashier his mandate.

There is considerable evidence that SRP intends to re-emerge in some new guise. This development is hard to combat, but some effective efforts have been made. Thus, in North Rhine-Westphalia the Deutsche Gemeinschaft was stricken from the ballot because it was a substitute organization for the SRP. In Lower Saxony, the State Minister of the Interior warned that, in local elections, no party tickets constituting a continuation of the SRP should be permitted; indeed, 62 camouflaged SRP electoral tickets were removed from the ballot on the basis of material found in the homes of SRP officials.

### **Action by German States**

Early in 1953, several German states clamped down on extremist groups, of both the right and the left. The Bavarian government was particularly active. On January 13, Bavaria banned a neo-Nazi group known as the Stosstrupp, and its subordinate body, the Deutscher Heimatschutz. Action also was taken against the Technische Dienst, which was associated with the Bund Deutscher Jugend. The latter group was the center of parliamentary acrimony and debate when it was learned that a list, prepared by the Bund, of Germans to be liquidated in the event of war, included several prominent parliamentary leaders. Particularly embarrassing to the United States was the disclosure that American officials, unaware of the Bund's anti-democratic nature, had helped finance it as an anti-Communist group.

In Bavaria, also, the authorities prohibited neo-Nazi meetings camouflaged as SS Diskussionskreis, or discussion groups. Chairman of this movement was Willi Weiss-Reudi, former SRP functionary, with a criminal record. The Bavarian government has submitted a draft law to the state parliament entitled "Law for Safeguarding Political Peace in Bavaria," to authorize action against out-and-out extremist groups.

The State of Hesse also banned the Bund Deutscher Jugend and its partisan organizations, as did Bremen, Lower Saxony and Hamburg. Hamburg, moreover, refused to grant Hjalmar Schacht a license to operate a bank—in contrast to North Rhine-Westphalia where he found more leniency.

However, officials in North Rhine-Westphalia put down the Bewegung Reich, which included such people as the former Nazi Gauleiter for South Westphalia, and the former Nazi Lord Mayor of the town of Luedenscheid. Another Bewegung stronghold was in Upper Bavaria where the editor of the group's paper, *Deutschlandbriefe*, had to appear before the courts on the charge of seeking to restore nazism. This group's connection with Nazi circles in Spain should be noted: at present, the *Deutschlandbriefe* is being edited and published by Rudolf Schrader-Voss in Barcelona.

### **Dissolution of the Freikorps Deutschland**

In February 1953, one of the most hard-bitten of the neo-Nazi groups, the Freikorps Deutschland, was prosecuted by the Government on the grounds that "it is a paramilitary, neo-Nazi organization" plotting to seize power by force. The homes of thirty-five ringleaders were searched, and six were arrested; most of these have now been released by the courts. At the same time, the Government instructed the states to prohibit any further activity by the Freikorps.

This group openly adhered to the 25-point "revised program" of the Nazi party, advocated anti-Semitism, and preached hostility toward freemasons and "supra-national powers." Less subtle than the Naumann group, the Freikorps was mainly composed of Nazi roughnecks who hoped to take up where the Brownshirts had left off, and whose effectiveness consisted in keeping the unmodified Nazi idea alive among the radical fringe.

In view of the fact that the Freikorps was founded during July and August 1951—and not in July 1952, as the head of the Department for Public Safety in Bonn's Ministry of Interior informed the press—the question arises as to why the Government did not act sooner, especially since the organization's aims were clear at the outset. The Government's overdue move was apparently animated by the Naumann disclosures which underscored the dangers in neo-Nazi maneuvers and by the desire to show that it could fight back.

In fact, one beneficial outcome of the Naumann affair may be the shock



to governmental complacency about neo-nazism. The authorities have persistently ranked neo-nazism far below communism as a threat, although the Communist party and its satellites, commanding less than 5 per cent of the West German vote, possess little more than nuisance value on the domestic scene. All of the Communist party fronts—as, for example, the German Unity campaign—have been rejected by the general public upon learning who was behind them. The Communists, therefore, unlike the neo-Nazis, have encountered difficulty in attempting to infiltrate other groups, although they certainly have made every effort to do so, particularly among the veterans' organizations. Furthermore, men who have been too closely identified with Communist drives of one kind or another, such as Pastor Niemoller and former Reichskanzler Josef Wirth, appear to be losing support and popularity.

While the Government has moved against Communist groups without any prompting, some sort of stimulus—the British action, editorial comment or outside opinion—has been needed to set the authorities in motion against neo-Nazi elements. Action against the Socialist Reich party and the Freikorps was preceded or accompanied by action against the Communist party.

Many of the more conservative and nationalist-minded members of the Government have thought of neo-nazism in terms of the splinter rightist-extremist groups. Some Government officials have encouraged former Nazis to join their own parties, or even their own staffs. The realization, after the Naumann plot, that the "respectable" neo-Nazis were seeking the scalps of the selfsame Government leaders may account for the vigorous reaction of men like Dehler and Bleucher who had tried to harmonize the nationalist and liberal wings of the FDP.

The extent to which prominent Germans who hitherto minimized the neo-Nazi threat are revising their ideas can only be considered a democratic gain.

### ***Ideological Warfare Against Neo-Nazism***

The major parties, the CDU and the Socialists, are striving to fight ultra-nationalism in their own ways.

Chancellor Adenauer is convinced that the proper tactic is to prove the viability and strength of democracy by showing that it works, and that it can bring benefits to West Germany on the international scene and on the home front. He believes in taking the sting out of nationalism by giving the more rightist parties some governmental responsibility, so that they do not come to represent, in the public mind, a convenient alternative to democratic rule. He counts on the pragmatic functioning of democratic institutions in Germany to sell Germans on democracy.

The Socialist party is the most outspoken foe of neo-nazism and communism.

The party publishes a stream of pamphlets, posters, brochures, and other material attacking neo-Nazi ideas, and seeks to drive home to the German people what the Hitler regime cost them. Together with the trade unions, the Socialists keep careful track of the activities of Nazi-like groups and of former prominent Nazis, in order to alert the press and public.

On the other hand, the Socialists, particularly as regards foreign policy and the need for re-uniting West and East Germany, have often used arguments of a highly nationalist tenor, constantly criticizing the Allied powers, emphasizing the need for complete German sovereignty, and portraying every diplomatic action of the Adenauer Government as a surrender of sovereignty. With this line of thought, the Social Democrats have been aiding the ultra-nationalist forces which stress the same themes, but whose real object is the overthrow of democratic government.

On the democratic side of the ledger is an alert independent press, which has been helpful in bringing Nazi doings to light. The newspapers often have generated enough opinion to arouse the Government, and have fought certain of the more authoritarian measures proposed in the name of centralization. To give but two examples, independent editors and broadcasters brought about investigation of neo-Nazi infiltration in the Foreign Office; and waged a winning battle against Government-proposed measures that would have permitted more centralized control over the press and radio.

Little known outside of Germany are a variety of groups which are actively fostering democratic ideals and combatting various manifestations of nazism and ultra-nationalism.

For example, the Rundbriefe group around Dr. Gertrud Luckner is dedicated to "fostering friendship between Christians and Jews." This work is mainly limited to Southwest Germany.

In Bavaria, where the struggle against a Nazi comeback is becoming more urgent, there is an organization known as the Landesrat für Freiheit und Recht, with headquarters in Munich, which is doing effective work.

In Hesse, similar tasks are being tackled by the Verband für Freiheit und Menschenwürde. Both this organization and the Landesrat are loosely affiliated with the Bund für Freiheit und Recht, which in turn is affiliated with the International Free Federation of Deportees and Internees of the Resistance. The Bund für Freiheit und Recht published one of the best anti-Nazi weeklies to appear on the German scene, *Das Freie Wort*.

Good work also is being done by the Societies for Christian-Jewish Cooperation which correspond, more or less, to the local chapters of the National Conference of Christians and Jews and of the World Brotherhood. For the most part, the Societies strive to work through the Christian Churches.

One of the organizations that has attracted a good deal of attention is "Peace With Israel," initiated and headed by Erich Lueth, who is press officer for the city-state of Hamburg. This group helped prepare German public opinion for the restitution agreements.

In Munich and elsewhere, intellectuals, journalists and politicians are joined together in the Lessing Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Toleranz.

In Berlin are the offices of the Kongress für die Freiheit der Kultur which, though founded to combat the cultural pretensions of communism, also assails the Nazi "intellectuals." Associated with the Kongress is Die Demokratische Gruppe, which came together at the end of 1951 to block the Berlin showing of the films of Veit Harlan, who created the notorious anti-Semitic propaganda picture *Jud Suss*. The Gruppe decided to remain in existence to fight Nazi movements in Berlin.

The difficulty is that no major, over-all group has yet managed to unite the different forces fighting neo-nazism in Germany. Could this be accomplished, a national headquarters established and adequate financial support secured, a potent weapon might be forged with which to combat neo-nazism on the public opinion front, and protect democratic rights and institutions from invasion.

This is one of the major tasks to which the supporters of democracy inside and outside of West Germany must now address themselves.









